

Journaling Companion: When the Sight of Toys Makes You Want to Scream

A grounding tool for mothers navigating sensory and emotional overwhelm in the home
By Mina Todorova

Part 1: Before the Mess

1. What kind of space makes you feel calm, whole, and safe?

Describe it in detail. Is it quiet, ordered, colorful, warm, clean, soft, minimal?

2. What were the spaces like in your childhood home?

*Were you allowed to make a mess? Were there spaces where you felt safe to be yourself?
Did someone criticize your tidiness or chaos?*

3. What messages did you receive about control, order, or being “too much”?

Were you ever told you were messy, dramatic, too sensitive, or not enough?

Part 2: The Current Trigger

4. Describe in detail a recent moment when you felt the trigger rise.

What did you see? Where were the items? Who was there? What happened in your body?

5. What thoughts did you have in that moment?

Were they about the mess, your partner, yourself, your child, or your capacity?

6. What was underneath the irritation?

Did you feel unseen, disrespected, trapped, overstimulated, out of control, helpless, ashamed?

Part 3: The Deeper Roots

7. When you imagine being fully alone in a visually calm space, what emotions come up?

Is it peace? Relief? Guilt? Sadness? Longing?

8. What unmet needs are most often hiding inside the clutter?

Touch hunger? Solitude? Quiet? Autonomy? Respect? Space to feel like a person again?

9. In what ways do you try to earn that peace rather than claim it?

Do you wait for everyone to sleep? Push yourself to clean perfectly first? Believe you have to “deserve” a break?

Part 4: Moving Forward With Compassion

10. What kind of rhythm or system would feel nourishing to YOU, not just effective?

Less visual clutter? Clear zones? Gentle rituals? Shared responsibility?

11. What are 2 ways your space could support your nervous system better starting this week?

12. What does it look like to say: “This is my space, too”?

Closing Mantra

“I am allowed to need beauty. I am allowed to need rest. I am allowed to have space in this home—and within myself.”
